Frame your shots to create a compelling visual story that keeps your audience glued to the screen.

Basics of composition
When you’re making a video, everything that you put in the frame says something. By controlling the composition—through the camera angle, focal length, and subject distance—you can communicate with your audience and hold their attention.

Creators often use these tactics:

- **Rule of Thirds.** Divide the frame vertically and horizontally into thirds. Then place your subject at the intersection of the lines. This helps guide viewers’ eyes to the main points of interest.

- **Balance.** Use symmetry if you want to place equal weight on each side of the frame—for example, two people who are side by side speaking directly into the camera.

- **Depth.** Adjust your focus on the foreground, midground, and background to give each moment the right look and feel.

You can experiment with multiple compositions within the same video to find out what gives you the right results.

**See it in action**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use rule of thirds to divide your frame</th>
<th>Balance both sides of your shot</th>
<th>Experiment with your depth of field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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**Types of shots**
While you have a bunch of options, it helps to be familiar with these basic types of camera shots:

- **Wide** angle shots help set up the scene and give the viewer context.
- **Medium shots** are all-purpose and can direct the focus of the viewer to what's coming next.
- **Close-up** shots are often used to hone in on personal conversations without distractions.

Think about how different shots influence your audience's interpretation of your story and add personality to your video.

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**Camera movement**

Motion can give your video energy and indicate a change in emotional story point. It’s not just where you move your camera, but how you move it that matters. Tilting your camera up and down and panning to the left or right can be a subtle way to change your viewer’s focus. Zooming in with your camera tells your viewer, “Hey, look at this!”

Physically moving the camera can create more dynamic footage. You can move your camera with your hands or with the help of extra gear. Quick tip: try mounting your camera on a wheelchair or wagon in order to film alongside a moving subject.

Unwanted movement can be jarring, so try to keep your camera as stabilized as possible. One simple tool to reduce camera shake is a camera strap or harness that can be comfortably wrapped around the body. For smaller cameras (including your smartphone), a selfie stick can do the trick. Also, there are tripods at a range of price points, which can allow you to steadily pan and tilt your shot.
See it in action

A flowing production style
The director has characters sing directly into the camera and dance around it, which catches the audience's attention and adds humor.

Capturing action
To create the effect of flying, the director places the camera behind the hoverboard rider and films from the air.

Your best shots
As you’re recording, you can follow these tips to capture shots like a pro:

- **Do multiple takes.** There’s no magic number, but be open to shooting a scene again until it looks and sounds good. Although you can fix some things in editing, you can’t go back in time, so it’s better to have alternate takes from which you can select.

- **Make notes.** When continuously recording multiple takes, try using a visual or audio marker for separation. For example, you can hold up a small whiteboard or call out the scene and take. Also, it usually helps to jot down which takes are your favorites.

- **Keep spares.** There are things to do before the actual day of your shoot (see checklist). Now that the camera’s rolling, have your spare batteries and memory cards nearby. You definitely don’t want to run out of power or storage in the middle of recording.

When you’re finished recording, it’s highly advised to **back up your footage.** Some creators back up twice: to their computer and an external hard drive. Keep in mind that uncompressed video can take up a lot of space, so look into your storage needs and figure out a reliable backup system that works for you.
Try it

Use the “rule of thirds” to frame a shot. How does this affect your perception of the shot?

Shoot a short video with different camera movements. What does the motion accomplish?

Check your knowledge

Why is composition important for making videos?

- It tells your audience where to look.
- It provides a voice for your subjects.
- It shows that you have high-tech equipment.
- It keeps your production on budget.

Sign in first if you want to save your results.